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Security Information

11 May 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: CPP

SUBJECT: Hungarian Crop Shortage

1. Reference is made to the proposal to distribute American food parcels to needy Hungarians through the International Red Cross. SR Division recommends that such parcels be sent, in quantities and under conditions which seem appropriate to the American Minister to Hungary. It is understood, of course, that the Minister's recommendations will be reviewed for feasibility and in the light of information available from other sources.

2. The parcels should be sent because:

a. Such relief is consistent with the American moral position of helping people in need, be they friends, neutrals, or foes. Dispatch of relief parcels to Hungary would not be dissimilar from the massive supply of aid to defeated Germany, only two months after the conclusion of bitter hostilities.

b. Sending such parcels would implement the American policy of distinguishing between people who live under Communist regimes and the regimes themselves.

c. The receipt of such parcels by Hungarian citizens would symbolize to them the life of kindness and material bounty that will accrue to them once they are free.

d. Sending such parcels is an act that will shine like any "good deed through a naughty world."

3. The objection to the proposal that the Hungarian crop failure has not been sufficiently severe to justify American aid is not relevant. It is well known that material conditions, under Communist rule, are extremely poor and that, even without crop failures, people living under Communism are in need of aid.

4. The fact that the Hungarian Government may accuse the United States of having poisoned these food parcels should not serve as a deterrent. If it is true that there is wide spread Hungarian opposition to their regime, then the Hungarians will not be much impressed by the cry of "poison." In any case, Hungarians who receive the parcels will know better. Possible Hungarian Communist attempts either to declare the parcels poisoned or actually to poison them can be forestalled by American declarations, at the appropriate time, that the United States has advance knowledge of such Communist intent.

5. The objection that non-Communist countries will disapprove of the sending of parcels is no good ground for abandoning the scheme. The great

majority of non-Communist countries have been offered and have received substantial American aid. The small contribution to Hungary will not materially divert American aid from the Allies. Any Allies who protest will have a weak, uncharitable case which U.S. information media can easily knock down. On the other hand, it seems much more likely that neutralist countries, who complain about American aggressiveness, will be favorably impressed by so pacific an American gesture.

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Approved For Release 2000/09/01 : CIA-RDP80-01065A000600080007-7

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: Officer designations should be used in the "TO" column. Under each comment a line should be drawn across sheet and each comment numbered to correspond with the number in the "TO" column. Each officer should initial (check mark insufficient) before further routing. This Routing and Record Sheet should be returned to Registry.

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NO.

DATE

12 May 1953

WD'D

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INITIALS

COMMENTS

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